

A Letter to Mr. SACHEVERELL,

Occasion'd by His

Affize Sermon :

Preach'd at St. Mary's in Oxford, March 9th, 170³/₄.

HAVING lately Perus'd your *Affize Sermon*, Preach'd at St. Mary's in Oxford, I was very much surpriz'd to find one, who pretends to be of the *Church of England*, should so far forget his Profession, as to Divest himself of all the Marks of *Christianity*; and instead of Manifesting any part of that *Charity*, *Meekness*, and *Humility*, which the Gospel every where recommends, should, even in the very Pulpit, break out into the most Turbulent and Scurrilous Invectives, that deprav'd Nature ever suggested to the most exasperated Worldling. I have therefore undertaken to Write to you in this Publick manner, that no Body may be so far deceiv'd as to take the Measures, either of the Education at our Universities, or of the Spirit of our Divines, or of the *Prudence*, *Piety*, and *Doctrine* of the *Church of England*, from the Inconsiderate Buffoonery of so Vile an Interloper, as you have shown your self. Those Gardens of Ours use to bear much better Fruit: There may indeed sometimes happen an ill Year, or there may be such a Crab-Stock as cannot by all Ingrafting be Corrected; but generally it proves otherwise. Once, perhaps, in an Age, there may arise such a Prodigy of a Man in the University, (where most Men Learn

better Arts and better Manners) and from thence may creep into the Church, as shall neither know, or care how, to behave himself, to God or Man; and who having never seen the Receptacle of *Grace* or *Conscience* at an Anatomical Dissection, may therefore conclude that there's no such Matter, or no such Obligation among Christians, who shall strive to put the World into Blood, and Animate Princes to be the Executioners of the best of their Subjects. That all this is possible, you are a Living Proof, as I hope I shall make it appear in the Subsequent part of this Epistle.

You have thought fit to Intitle your Sermon *The Nature and Mischief of Prejudice and Partiality Stated*, which I cannot but observe was a very unnecessary Undertaking in you, who in your own Nature, plainly demonstrate that of *Partiality* and *Prejudice*, and by your whole Life and Conversation give the World just reason to apprehend the Mischief, the Violent and Furious Temper of so hot Headed an Incendiary may produce, to the Church and State. From what particular Cause your Prejudice proceeds; Whether it be your Complexional Vice, for as you are pleas'd to Observe in the 12th Page of your Sermon, *Where a Mans Nature is wrought up with Impetuosity and Fire, the Spirit will exert it self in Boldness and Ambition, in Rage and Rashness, in Turbulency and Choler, which will make all his Counsels Sanguine and Precipitate, his Actions Unadvised and Unsteady*: Or whether it be the effect of Education and Custom, Ignorance and Affectation, Conversation and Company, Authority and Example, Interest and Party, or a Vitious and Debauch'd Life; (from some of which you say all the Prejudice that Reigns in the World arises.) I shall not go about to determine, tho' I'm inclin'd to believe they have all in some measure Contributed to make you the most Partial and Prejudic'd Man, that any Age or Nation hath produc'd. This will appear, 1st. from your Appropriating all the Loyalty to a particular

particular Set of Zealors and Bigots, who, in spight of Fate, will be accounted the *Church of England*. 2dly, from your Insinuating in your Dedication, and in the 56th page of your Nauseous Discourse, *That the Crown can never rest safe and secure on the Princes Head, but as 'tis upheld by the Principles and Doctrine of the Church*. 3dly, From your immoderate Railing against the whole Body of the *Non-Conformists*, whom you Represent to be all, to a Man, *Schismaticks and Hypocrites*, Men of most *Pestilent Republican Principles*, and *eo nomine* Enemies to Monarchy, Traytors and Rebels, such Miscreants as never were in the World before; and fit to be pack'd out of it with the first convenience. 4thly, By your recommending Persecution, and reproaching the Government for its too great Mildness.

As to your first point, 'tis plain they, whom you call the *Only true Churchmen*, are Men void of all Consideration and Moderation; and I defie you to give one instance of any of them, either of the *Clergy* or *Laity*, who, since they have got into Power or Office, did ever make the least Experiment, or Overture towards the Peace of the Church, and the Nation they Live in; which, in these Divided times, are the best Instances Men in Power can give of their Affection to the Government they've the Happiness to serve: As for those among the Clergy, whom you may think worthy of the High Title of *Good Churchmen*, they are the *Politick-would-be's* of that Body; not *Bishops*, but Men that have a Mind to be Bishops, and that will do any thing in the World to compass it. They are Men of a Fiery Nature, that must always be uppermost, and so they may increase their own splendor, care not, tho' they set all on Flame about them; you would think (I beg your Pardon Sir, I mean any Body else would think) the same day they took up Divinity, they Divested themselves of Humanity, and so they may Procure and Execute a Law
against

against *Dissenters*; that they had forgot the Gospel. They cannot endure that Humility, that Meekness, that Strictness of Manners and Conversation, which is the true way of gaining Reputation and Authority to the Clergy, much less can they Content themselves with the Ordinary and Comfortable Provision that is made for the Ministry. But having wholly Calculated themselves for Preferment, and Grandeur, Know and Practice no other means to make themselves Venerable, but by Ceremony and Severity; whereas the highest Advantage of Promotion, is the opportunity of Condescension, and the greatest Dignity in our Church, can but raise them to the Title of *Your Grace*, which is in the Latin *Vestra Clementia*: Whether this be the true way of Ingratiating your selves with a Pious, Generous, and Discerning Queen, I meddle not; That which only raises my Indignation is, That of all sorts of Men, this kind of Clergy should always be for the most Precipitate and Sanguinary Councils. The former *Civil-War* cannot make them Wise, nor Her Majesties Happy and Prosperous Reign, Good Natured; but they are still for running things up unto the same fatal Extrems. The gentleness of Christianity, in which they have been Nurtur'd, hath but Exasperated their Nature; and they seem to have Contracted no Idea of Wisdom but what they Learn'd at School, the Pedantry of Whipping. They take themselves qualified to Preach the Gospel, and no less fit to Intermeddle in Affairs of State; tho' the reach of their Divinity is but to Persecution, and an Inquisition is the height of their Policy.

As to your 2d point of the Churches securing the Crown on the Queens Head. Give me leave, good Worthy Sir, to call that, your *Push-Pin-Divinity*; for you would thereby perswade Princes that there cannot a Pin be pull'd out of the Church, but the State immediately Totters. It's true indeed, and we have had Experiments

periments of it that some Clergy-Men have been so Opiniatre, that they have rather exposed the State to Ruin, than they would part with a Pin; I will not lay out of the Church, but out of their Sleeve. There is nothing more Natural than for the Ivy to be of Opinion that the Oak cannot stand without its Support: Or, Seeing we are got into Ivy, that the Church cannot hold up any longer, than it under Props the Walls. Whereas it is a Sneaking Insinuating Imp, scarce better than Bindweed, that sucks the Tree Dry, and moulders the Building where it Catches; so that till you will vouchsafe to bring some better Authority than your own Dogmatical *Ipse Dixit*: You must not take it ill if People are not presently perswaded, That, but for your Assistance, Princes might go a Begging; and that the Church, that is, you and your Party, have the *Jus Patronatus* of the Kingdom, and may Present whom you think fitting to the Crown of England. This is indeed something like the Return of Popery; and right

Petra dedit petro, petrus Diadema Radulpho.

The Crown were surely well help'd up, if it were to be held at your Convenience, and the Emperour must lead the *Patriarchs* Ass all his Life-time.

As to your 3d point, 'Tis just your way of Writing all along, nothing sound or solid is offer'd at, only you think you've got the *Great Secret*, or the *Philosophers Stone* of Railing; and I'm apt to believe it, you've so Multiply'd it in Projection; and as they into *Gold*, so you turn every thing you meet with into *Railing*. and yet the Secret is not Great, nor the Process Long or Difficult, if a Man would Study it, and make a Trade on't. Every *Scold* hath it Naturally; 'tis but crying *Whore* first, and having the last Word; and whatsoever t'other Party says, cry *Oh! these are your Presbyterian Tricks! Oh, these are the Old practices of Forty One! Oh the Fanaticks! Oh the Regicides!* So that except the Manufacture of

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your

your Periods, you have done no more than any School-Boy could have done on the same Terms. But, as to that, Mr. *Sacheverel*, which you still Inculcate of the late *Rebellion* and *Civil War*, which serves you as a Demonstration for every thing; and the Detestable Sentence and Execution of King *Charles*, which you often take occasion to Represent again on the Scaffold. 'Tis now a great many Years ago, and after an Act of Oblivion; and for ought I can see, it had been as seasonable to have shewn *Cæsars* Bloody Coat, or *Thomas a Beckett's* Bloody Surplice.

The chief of the Offenders have, long since, made satisfaction to Justice; and the whole Nation hath been Swept sufficiently by the Terrible Scourges of Heaven; so that methinks your Mischievous Appetite might be Satiated. Whoever suffer'd in those Times, Her Majesties Royal Ancestors had much the greater Loss; and She is therefore the best Judge how long the Revenge ought to be pursued. But if indeed out of your Superlative Care of Her Majesty and your Livings, you are affraid of some new Disturbance of the same Nature. Let me so far satisfy you as I am satisfy'd: The *Dissenters* say, *That they are bound in Conscience to Act as far as they can, and for the rest to Suffer*. But because tho' they do mean Honestly, 'tis so hard a Chapter for one that thinks himself in the Right to suffer Extremities Patiently, that some think it impossible. I say next, That 'tis very seldom seen that a *Civil War*, after such an Interval, has been rais'd again upon the same pretences. A new *War*, like a Book that would Sell, must have a new Title. To be short, the *Dissenters* are so well satisfy'd with their Toleration, and with the Gracious Assurances Her Majesty has been pleased to give them of maintaining it; that if there were any such Knave, there can be no such Fool among them, that would ever Harbour an ill thought of Her. And for you, I hope She is assur'd of your Loyalty; so that I think you may enjoy your Living

ving and Fellowship very Peaceably, which I know is all your Business. There are as many occasions of War, as there are Vices in a Nation, and therefore it concerns a Prince to be watchful on all Hands. But should Kings remember an Injury, as long as you Implacable Divines, or should we take up Arms at your Peeks, to Revenge all your Bullying Quarels, the World would never be at quiet. Therefore, good Sir, let all those things of former times alone, and apply your self to your own Business.

But to conclude this point; whenever you will be pleased so far to abate of the Exuberancy of your Fancy and Wit, and dispence with your Ornaments and Superfluities of Invention and Satyr, as to descend to a Gentleman-like, and Scholar-like Disputation, back'd with other Authorities, besides your own, to prove the *Dissenters* to be *Schismaticks* and *Hypocrites*, *Traytors* and *Rebels*; as also to prove that the *Episcopal-Party* in *Scotland* now Labour under a Bloody Persecution from the Church there Establish'd. (For all which we have as yet only your bare Word, which proves nothing but your own Unpardonable Ignorance, Inveterate Rancour and Malice, as well matchless Front and Impudence) I dare undertake you shall have a full Answer, with a Name to it.

I come now to the Fourth Point, which is *Persecution* recommended; and this (notwithstanding your Spurious Title) appears plainly to be the main scope and design of your Discourse. For Her Majesty having been Graciously pleased to Corroborate the Toleration by Her Royal Promise to Maintain it; and yet for all this, a New Law having been Violently promoted by you and your Party to Abridge *Dissenters* of the Priviledges they Enjoy by it, which was wisely rejected by Persons of Hearts and Principles intirely *English*; (for 'twere pity the whole Nation should run Mad at once.) From that time Her Majesty and the Legislature fell into Disgrace with you; and any one that had
Eyes

Eyes may discern that you do not afford them that Countenance and Favour, which they formerly Enjoy'd: Hence it proceeds, that you dare to Reproach Her Majesty for shewing Favour to such dangerous Vipers, such ravenous Wolves, such irreconcilable Enemies to the Church and State, as the *Dissenters*; hence it is that you take upon you to find Fault with our Laws, as Deficient for the security of the Government; and Instruct Princes, like *Sancho*, to Govern his Island; that you call out for Prisons and Pillorys; for *Hamans* Preferment for your self, and for his Punishment for all the *Dissenters*. *Julian* himself, who, I think, was first a Reader, and held forth in the Christian Churches, before he turn'd *Apostate*, and then Persecutor, would not have out-done you in Cruelty; only it is Gods Mercy, Mr. *Sacheverel*, that you are not King. It were not unwisely done indeed, if you could perswade the Magistrate that all the *Fanaticks* have but one Neck; so that he might take an occasion to Cut off *Non-Conformity* at one blow; but as for them, they would do well to be watchful, lest you should have taken a List of all their Names, and set Crosses upon their Doors, against there may be occasion. Yet, in the mean time, I cannot but admire at your Courage, who knowing how dangerous a Villain a *Fanatick* is; and how many of them there are; yet dare thus openly Stimulate the Magistrate against them. It is sure some sign of the Peaceableness of their Principles, and of that Restraint, under which their Tender Consciences held them (of which you are sensible) when nevertheless you may walk Night and Day in safety, tho' 'twere so easie a thing to Deifie you after the Antient manner, and no Man be the Wiser.

But since the Government, for Substantial Reasons, the depth of which your Lead cannot Fathom, hath thought fit to Indulge *Dissenters* in their Toleration. I hope, Mr. *Sacheverel*, that we shall not see, when you have a mind to Junket with your Mistress, that

that the *Entremesses* shall be of a *Fanaticks Giblets*; nor that a *Non-Conformist's* Head must be wip'd off as often as your Nose Drivles. 'Tis sufficient, Sir, that we know your Inclination, we know your Abilities, and we know your Lodging, and when there is any further occasion you will doubtless be sent for: For to say the Truth, you are an excellent Tool, and more useful than Ten other Men. I will undertake that, rather than fail, you will be the Trapper, the Informer, the Witness, the Attorney, the Judge, and if the *Non-Conformist* need the Benefit of the Book, you shall be Ordinary too; and say *He's an Ignorant Fellow, Non Legit*; and to do him the last Christian Office, you would be his Hangman. In the mean time you must be Contented to Enjoy it in Speculation, secure of all the Employments, when they shall fall. For I know no Gentleman that will take any of them out of your Hands, altho' it be an Age, wherein Men cannot well Support their Quality, without some Accession from the Publick. And for the Ordinary sort of People they are, I know not by what Disaster, Abandon'd to *Fanaticism*; so that you must either do it your self in Person, or be pleas'd to Constitute the Chief Magistrate to be your Deputy: But Princes do indeed understand themselves better, most of 'em, and do neither think it Decent, or Safe to take your Head-long Advice, or to Intrust a Clergyman with their Authority: For whether it be that the Clergy are not so well fitted by Education, as others, for Political Affairs, I know not; yet 'tis generally observed, That things Miscarry under their Government; If there be any Counsel more Violent, more Precipitate, more Rigorous, more Extream than other, that is theirs. The Reason that God does not Bless them in Affairs of State, is, because he never intended them for that Employment; or else God therefore frustrates them, because (tho' they know better).

better) they seek and manage their Greatness by the Lesser and Meaner Maxims; therefore, good Mr. *Sacheverel*, rest your self Contented; Study Divinity more, and Politicks less; for I dare assure you, you will not be thought to deserve a Bishoprick by your Invectives against *Dissenters*, and Directing the Government how to use them, in that Saucy manner you have taken upon you to do; for this, instead of being a Service to the Queen and Church, does them both the greatest prejudice in the World; neither unless Men have better Principles at Home, are they likely to be Reduc'd by your way of Arguing; or rather Railing; for tho' it hath been long Practic'd, I never observed any great Success by Reviling Men into *Conformity*. I have heard that Charms may even invite the Moon out of Heaven, but I never could see her moved with the Rhetorick of Barking.

I think it ought to be highly Penal for any Man to pretend to Impose other Conditions upon Her Majesties good Subjects than the Queen Expect, or the Law Requires: When you have done all, truly you must appear before Mr. *Sacheverel's* Tribunal, and he hath a New Test of his own to put to you. I must confess at this Rate the *Dissenters* deserve some Compassion, if after they have done to the utmost, they must still be Subject to the Wand of a Verger, or to the wanton Lash of every *Pedant*, or run the *Ganteloop* as often as your *Spleen* wants to be diverted by so agreeable an Entertainment.

To conclude: By this *Doctrine* of yours, it is very manifest that you and others of your Principles Repine at the Blessings the Nation now enjoys under Her Gracious Majesty's most Benign and Prosperous Government, that you desire nothing more than to Fish in Troubled Waters, to bring about another Restoration, by dividing us at Home, in hopes that you may thereby have a Prince after

ter *your* own Hearts, that will go *your* full length, that will first make all his *People* Slaves to his *Arbitrary Will*, and then suffer *you* and the rest of *your Faction* to Enjoy as Absolute a Dominion over him. But since *you* are not to be pleas'd but at so dear a Rate, I can't think it want of *Charity* to wish that *you may* ever be *Discontented*.

And now what remains, but that, if you have any Sparks of *Vertue* Unextinguish'd, you should upon considering these things, retire into your *Closet*, and there *Lament* and *Pine away* for *your Desperate Folly*, for the *Disgrace* you have, as far as in *you* lies, brought upon the *Church of England*, and for the *Eternal Shame* to which *you* have *Condemn'd your own Memory*, which that *you may* have the *Grace* to do, is the *Hearty Desire* of

Most Worthy and most Reverend Sir,

Your very Unknown Servant.

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let your own Hearts, that will go your full length, that will first
 make all his People Slaves to his Arbitrary Will, and then latter
 you and the rest of your Faction to Enjoy as Absolute a Domini-
 on over him. But since you are not to be pleas'd but at so dear
 a Rate, I can't think it want of Charity to wish that you may
 ever be Discontented.

And now what remains but that if you have any Sparks of
 your Innocence left, you should upon considering these
 things, retire into your Cloister, and there bury up the enemy
 for your Disobedience. But for the Distance you have, as far as in you
 lies, brought upon the Church of England, and for the Eternal
 Shame to which you have condemn'd your own Memory, which
 that you may have the Grace to do, is the Heavy Deline of

M. J. Worthy and most Reverend Sir,

Your very Obedient Servant.

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